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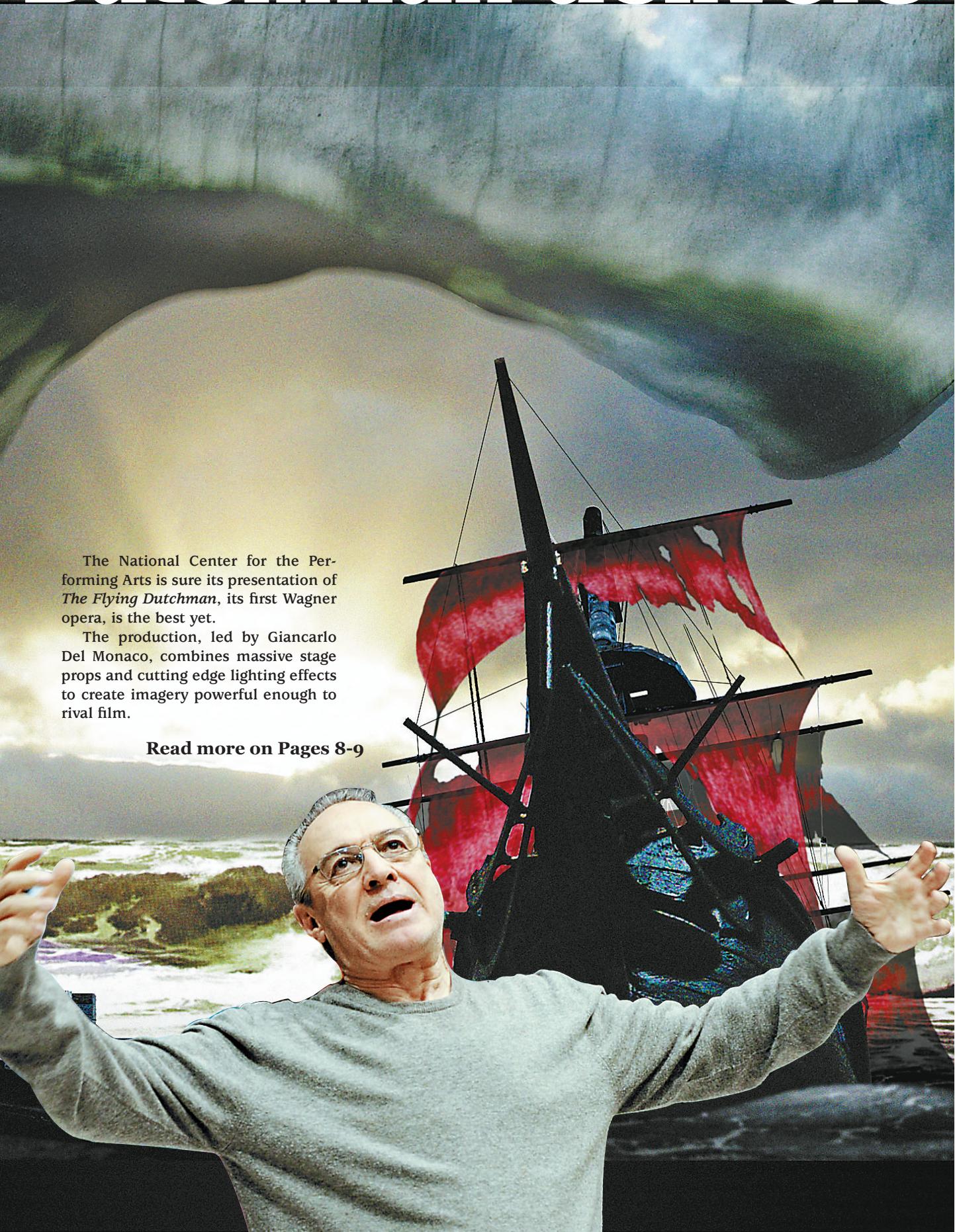
Create your
spring look

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北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

Dutchman delivers



The National Center for the Performing Arts is sure its presentation of *The Flying Dutchman*, its first Wagner opera, is the best yet.

The production, led by Giancarlo Del Monaco, combines massive stage props and cutting edge lighting effects to create imagery powerful enough to rival film.

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Brightening
the lives of
migrants

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Students don
boxes, turn
trash to art

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No secret parcels

Security rules for couriers raise privacy concerns



Under new delivery rules, people must show ID whenever sending or receiving parcels.

Zhan Min/CFP Photo

By Huang Daohen

Since March, all couriers in Beijing have been opening packages to check what clients send or receive to prepare for a new regulation by the State Post Bureau of China that will take effect next month.

The stricter security measures have worried those who would prefer the content of their packages to remain private.

Every delivery person must carefully examine the contents of parcels they receive and stamp their names or employee ID numbers on express bills, according to a new rule by the Beijing postal authority.

Clients who refuse to allow the delivery agents to open packages for inspection may have their packages refused, said Wang Wentai, director of market supervision for the postal authority.

"The authorities used to ask staff to do an open inspection and wrote that requirement into a regulation, but it has not been well enforced," Wang was quoted by *China Daily* as saying.

Such ignorance has brought danger to both workers and society, he said.

Wang is not bluffing.

Last August, a parcel exploded and injured two female employees at the office of local delivery firm YTO Express in downtown Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.

In early February, there was another mail bombing in Guangzhou that injured a man. The explosives were disguised as a festival gift.

"We were shocked by the news," said Gu Xiaotian, manager of YTO Express in Shilipu branch, Chaoyang District. Gu said it was a normal procedure for the industry to check every package, but that it is often skipped in favor of efficiency.

The company delivers more than 2.6 million packages every day across the country.

"But these cases have made us attach more importance to security," Gu said, adding that the firm is requiring couriers to inspect each package.

The company also began asking the customers to use a common bag that YTO provides upon pick-up.

"This way the customers can show the parcels for inspection before they are packed," Gu said.

Real-name delivery policy

The stricter rules also raised suspicions that the government may enforce a real-name system for the express delivery industry.

Currently, many consumers use the express delivery to fill online orders. A possible real-name policy would require the sender to show his or her identity card to the courier whenever a parcel is to be sent.

Gu said the real-name policy could become burdensome. "This will hamper the development of online sales," he said.

But the YTO headquarters think otherwise. Last year, as many as 25 express delivery firms including YTO began a pilot program to implement the real-name system in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province.

Couriers record the senders' ID cards and cell phone numbers in the computer during the delivery and local security departments were the information through special software.

Though inconvenient, real-name delivery is a trend for the better, Gu said.

Wang from the Beijing postal authority denied plans to implement a real-name requirement.

"The real-name policy is an experiment," he said. "What we currently require is open inspection, which is different."

Privacy and efficiency concerns

Yet the new requirements to open packages have triggered concerns over privacy and work efficiency.

That bothers Zhao Bo, a courier at the Shilipu branch of YTO Express. "I used to send about 200 parcels every day. Now I can send no more than 150," he said.

This will directly affect Zhao's income, which is based on the number of parcels he sends. The 21-year-old from Henan Province usually gets one to three yuan per parcel.

"Previously, I just checked the valuable articles and rarely asked my clients to show their ID cards," he said. "You cannot imagine how this has increased my workload."

Zhao isn't the only one reluctant to open the packages. Cai Juan, an officer working for a local IT firm, said she would refuse to send packages with her real identity.

"It would be embarrassing to have the parcel opened on site if you are sending something private, especially items for women," she said.

Cai also said she cared more about the speed of delivery than its safety.

But experts are with the government.

Chen Linhua, head of Shanghai Express Trade Association, said the new rules would be for the better even if they are difficult to implement.

Brief

Record numbers of grads seek jobs

A record 6.8 million college students, most born in 1990, will graduate from college this summer.

Four years ago, they were chosen by schools from among 10.5 million students, the highest number of high school graduates to ever sit the college entrance examination.

Now, each is facing an unprecedentedly difficult battle to find a job.

Surprised by the large crowds at job fairs, Zhou Qi, a student who will graduate this summer, decided to continue his studies at graduate school. He hates the idea of working for low pay and prefers to rely on his parents, both of whom have jobs with adequate salaries, rather than earn a living.

To be accepted by a graduate school, Zhou will have to pass a rigorous entrance examination. The Ministry of Education said there are 1.65 million taking the exam this year, 160,000 more than the previous year.

Only one-third will be admitted.

The competition could have been even more intense if fewer university graduates had chosen to study abroad.

A 2011 report issued by the Ministry of Education said the number of Chinese students studying abroad increased 24 percent per year over the last three years. The number was at 350,000 in 2011 and will grow to 430,000 in 2012.

Paper iPhones for ancestors

Paper-made Apple products have become a fad for this year's Qingming Festival, a time for cleaning graves and burning offerings for the dead.

A paper iPhone 4 or iPad 2, complete with earphones and a battery charger, costs as much as 100 yuan.

The fancy imitations are available only through advanced booking due to their time-consuming fabrication, says a paper goods shop owner who noted that the paper iPhones and iPads even have earphone jacks.

Some customers said they planned to burn the paper gadgets to "let their dead relatives experience how society has developed."

(Agencies)

Open your wallet

Country begins month-long campaign to promote domestic consumption



The government is seeking to boost domestic demand to transform the country's economy.

The Ministry of Commerce announced the launch of its 2012 Consumption Promotion Month between April 2 and May 4 to coincide with the Tomb Sweeping Day and Labor Day holidays.

The central government asked local branches to expand domestic consumption during the more than one-month period.

Premier Wen Jiabao said in a government work report during the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress earlier this month that the government will work to expand consumption demand in keeping with policies established under the 12th Five-Year Economic Development Plan.

In its announcement, the government requested that local commercial departments promote consumption, make

plans ahead of time, select a group of large business enterprises as well as food and catering services enterprises as the main body of the activity and carry out large-scale promotions in major cities.

The ministry said the promotion should aim to improve people's livelihoods and meet the public's material and cultural needs. It should expand the scale of consumption and make it more convenient. The announcement also asked that festive activities be launched to encourage consumption across the whole country.

To expand the scale of consumption, Wen said in the report that the government would further encourage resident consumption and actively develop care for the elderly, home management, property management and medical care services. It would focus on consumption in culture, tourism

and fitness. Further, it would support eco-friendly materials for construction, water conservation, cleaning equipment and green vehicles. Internet shopping would also receive attention, he said.

The country's commerce minister, Chen Deming, said government agencies are studying alternative policies to expand consumption.

Chen said the subsidies for the purchase of home appliances in rural areas would expire in 28 provincial cities and regions by the end of this year.

Meanwhile, the major tasks for the government this year would be recycling used electronics and old cars, holding activities to promote consumption and launching trial programs for modern service industries.

In addition, boutique stores and sites for world

conferences and exhibitions would be set up in Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, with brand exhibition centers launched around the country.

In related news, while China's GDP growth target was set at less than 8 percent this year, various factors are expected to boost the economy and the performance of China-related stocks.

Institutional investors said the national consumption promotion program, the two hikes in the banks' required reserve ratios in the last three months and the high expectation of long-term yuan appreciation would drive performance of China-related shares.

A market expert said an estimated 400 billion yuan (\$63.17 billion) was expected to be channeled into the market after the People's Bank of China again raised its RRR by 50 basis points.

A Qing/CFP Photo

Market watch

Alibaba tests social shopping

It is a marriage made in heaven for shopping addicts.

Social shopping, the merger of social networking and e-commerce that has hooked millions of users in the US, has captured the attention of the country's Internet giant.

Alibaba Group's social shopping platform Fa Xian (faxian.etao.com) launched for trial use four weeks ago and is already luring 60,000 viewers a day.

"In the long run, social commerce in China has the potential to be bigger than in the US," said Hans Tung, managing director of venture capital firm Qiming Ventures.

Social shopping websites allow users to post photos of items on virtual pin boards where other users can comment. Some sites allow users to purchase the items by clicking on the photos.

The business model originated in the US in the mid-2000s when firms such as Kaboodle first set up shops. Others have emerged since then, including Fab.com and most recently Pinterest.

In China, home of the world's largest Internet population with as many as half a billion users, social shopping websites, such as Mogujie, LinkChic and Xinxian have opened during the past year.

Alibaba, 40 percent owned by Yahoo Inc, is looking to incorporate these rivals into Fa Xian, which means discovery by the Chinese. Unlike on US social shopping websites, all the items on Fa Xian can be purchased through the parent company's own markets, Taobao Mall and Taobao Marketplace.

"We have about 10 partners right now. At the end of the year, I hope to see if we can achieve 100 partners, because this year China's social shopping industry is very hot," said Chen Lijuan, director at eTao, Alibaba's search unit that operates Fa Xian. Fa Xian also plans to expand to include other e-commerce vendors outside the Taobao ecosystem, such as Jingdong Mall.

Cao Xiaolei, a 30-year-old office worker who has been using Mogujie since last July, said she can spend up to an hour looking through the website for items she likes.

"The products on the website are pre-filtered to save me time and give me inspiration," she said.

(Agencies)

Analyst

Consumption to become top growth driver

With China emphasizing the quality, rather than speed, of its economic growth, there are high expectations for consumption to be the next driver, taking the place of exports and investment.

The research institute of the Ministry of Commerce reported that the shift will be smooth as domestic consumption is set to become the single biggest engine of growth this year for the first time in more than a decade. On the back of rising income and a growing willingness to spend, it predicts spend-

ing by Chinese consumers to increase by 15 percent.

The Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation is an institution under the Commerce Ministry. It says consumption in 2011 contributed 51.6 percent of the country's GDP, only 2.6 percentage points less than investment. The disparity was the smallest in a decade. This year, consumption is expected to continue to boom and surpass investment, becoming China's top economic-growth driver.

"Consumption is charac-

terized by its stability. As it becomes the top engine, that will aid China's steady and fast growth," said Zhao Ping, deputy director of Department of Consumption Economy Studies.

Experts suggest the government stick to policies that boost domestic consumption to maintain momentum.

"For policies which have just been drawn up or are about to expire, the government should draft measures to follow up," Zhao said.

While urban residents will remain the major consumer

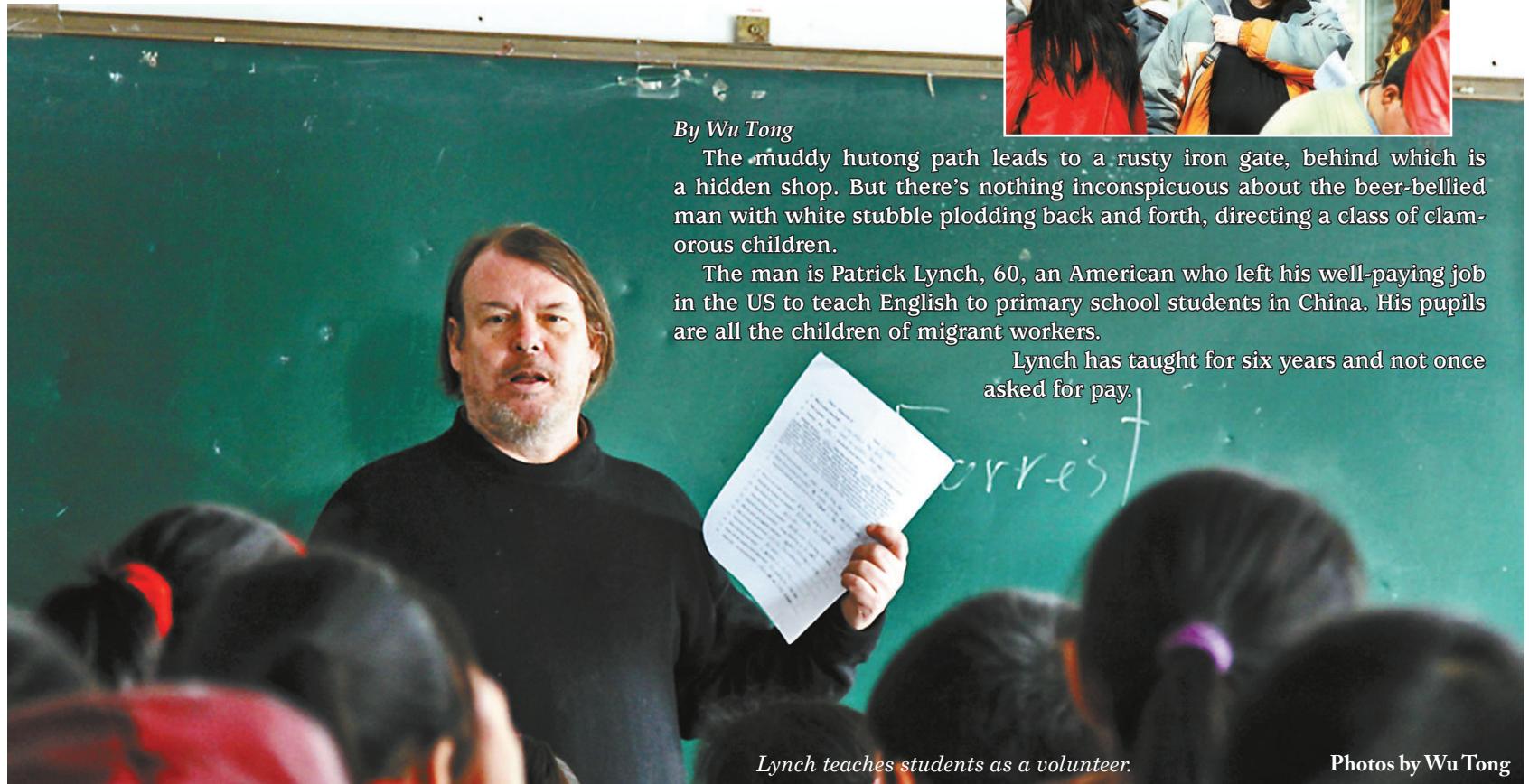
group, spending by rural residents is forecast to grow.

"I think increasing farmers' income is the most important way to boost their consumption," Zhao said.

In particular, spending on furniture, construction and home furnishings is expected to grow by 30 percent as a large number of affordable houses come onto the market. Gold jewelry could also see a boost, as Chinese consumers buy up the yellow metal – not only to adorn themselves, but also as an investment to hedge against risks. (Agencies)

(Agencies)

American volunteer brightens the lives of children



By Wu Tong

The muddy hutong path leads to a rusty iron gate, behind which is a hidden shop. But there's nothing inconspicuous about the beer-bellied man with white stubble plodding back and forth, directing a class of clamorous children.

The man is Patrick Lynch, 60, an American who left his well-paying job in the US to teach English to primary school students in China. His pupils are all the children of migrant workers.

Lynch has taught for six years and not once asked for pay.

Lynch teaches students as a volunteer.

Photos by Wu Tong

Start of a journey

Ten years ago, Lynch was an IT consultant who was given the option to extend his contract. He chose not to.

"I was pretty fed up with my work at that time," he said. "I was always working with people I knew weren't attractive enough to make me stay. I was 50 and began to think about what I was going to do for the rest of my life."

What he chose was to dedicate himself to children.

Lynch has always loved volunteer work. In the US, he often spent free time tutoring high school students, especially the children of immigrants. He taught English at night, mostly for children from Mexico and South America.

At first, Lynch thought he would move to South America, but friends in China convinced him to come here instead.

"They said that China has changed a lot. You should come and take a look around," Lynch said. "So I did."

Foreign volunteer

It didn't take Lynch long to find a job. Soon after landing, he became a teacher at Beijing Information Science and Technology University. Soon after, a friend introduced him to a primary school for the children of migrant workers.

"I talked with the principal and said to myself that I would help these kids," Lynch said.

The school is called Feng Hua Ai Xin Xi Wang (Love and Hope), located in Haidian District. Unlike most public schools, Feng Hua is nestled in the corner of a courtyard.

"The school has been demolished for three times," said He Yuping, a teacher who has taught at Feng Hua for seven years. "After the latest demolition, our principal found this yard and moved the school here."

He said that school has always lacked money and teaching facilities. "The teaching and learning environment are far from ideal," he said. "Life is not easy for these kids."

The school had hired foreigners before, but none had the patience and long-term commitment as Lynch.

For the past six years, the American has dropped by on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to teach fifth- and sixth-graders. He would immerse himself into groups and help with homework.

But kids are always kids. As Lynch said, "You can never expect kids to be quiet."

"I have my strategy to cope with these situations," he said. "To those extremely naughty kids, like those who can't stop loudly jabbering and even slapping others, my trio (of strategies) is: stand up, front row and outside."

However, the veteran educator admits that a lively atmosphere is sometimes appreciated.

"I don't think a quiet class is good for study," he said. "A bit of noise can activate their learning impulse."

"For these kids, I think it's a matter of maturity. The sixth graders are always quieter than the fifth graders. If the trio doesn't work, just get used to it. They are only kids after all."

Incremental teaching methodology

The only two scores Lynch gives are "excellent" and "very good," part of his strategy of "giving adulation to the kids."

"We all enjoy being flattered or praised," he said. "That's especially true for kids."

In class, Lynch would hug the children, sing with them and even dance with them. "Children want to become the center of attention. It could build up

their confidence," he said.

If most of the kids deliver their homework on time and behave well, he brings his stereo and let them listen to music.

Lynch said 70 percent of the students hand in their homework on time, while half the fifth graders are able to get perfect scores after three to four weeks.

But with success comes other problems.

"Our school has received too many kids recently," Lynch said. "I used to have 35 students in this room, but now there are almost 80. They are new to each other, sit close together and have no English background, so there are always distractions in the classroom."

The school is trying to recruit more volunteers, people such as Yang Tingting and Zou Linghong, students at Beijing Information Science and Technology who help out Lynch.

"I used to assign my volunteers to help me translate what I say to the kids in the classroom," Lynch said. "But it turned out that their presence in the class can be a distraction. Students don't know who should they listen to."

These days, Yang and Zou each pick five to seven kids whose English lags behind and helps them individually.

"I think they are very smart," Yang said. "It's unfair that they can't share the same teaching resources with kids in public schools."

"I know we can't do too much for them," Zou said. "I just hope that we can do our best to make a difference."

'School,' not 'zoo'

Lynch's story has spread online, but the publicity hasn't always been beneficial.

"I've seen too many people who just show up, walk around, take some pic-

tures and then leave," Lynch said. "Honestly, I don't encourage these people to come. This is a school, not a zoo."

Lynch said he's received inquiries from parents who want to send their children to Feng Hua for a while because they believe their children "don't appreciate what they have."

Lynch rejects those requests outright.

"You can't take this school as a way of educating your kids while ignoring the dignity of others," he said. "[Children of migrant workers] may not have the same learning environment as others, but these kids are surely as smart as every kid in public school."

Lynch said he might be a bit too protective as a teacher, having been around for six years.

"Of course, I would appreciate people who donate money, books and other materials to the school, and those who want to come and give real help," he said.

His dream is so that "one day, my students can all get into college so that I can teach them in my university class."

His efforts have not gone unrewarded.

"I remembered that once there was a girl sitting in the corner and wearing rag clothes on her first day," he said. She was very quiet, so much so that other teachers thought she had a learning disability.

That girl is now 17, owns a motorcycle, is outgoing and has a boyfriend.

He recalled that one of his other students came back to visit him just to give him a hug.

"I probably will do this for the rest of my life," Lynch said. "I hope all these kids have faith in themselves, find ways to solve problems on their own and keep making progress."

Israeli Embassy holds reading to convey similarities between all people



Weingrod with students

Photos by Wu Hao

By Wu Hao

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of Sino-Israeli diplomatic relations and strengthen the ties between the countries' people, the Israeli embassy held several readings of the book *Like You, Like Me* in Beijing from March 14 to 18, including at local schools and the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art.

The book, written by Elad Weingrod, tells the story of a Chinese boy who imagines a boy in Israel just like him.

At Shi Jia School

"Do you know Israel?" author Elad Weingrod asked a class at Shi Jia School.

"Yes, I know it," said a boy who stood up and replied in English. "It's a country – I can't remember clearly – maybe in east Asia."

The children all seemed excited about the event and were eager to interact with Weingrod and other officials from the Israeli embassy.

The visitors took turns reading the book in Hebrew and Chinese.

"They are very cute, intelligent and curious," Weingrod said.

When asked about their understanding of the book, a boy quickly raised his hand and said: "I think it's a story between a Chinese boy and an Israeli boy."

"Do you think in other places in the world there is someone just like you?" asked an official.

"Of course! Maybe their skin color isn't the same, but their thoughts are."

Weingrod also brought a song from a musical based on the story and had the children sing along.



Weingrod writes his name on a card for children.

Students were asked to draw themselves and their best friend or someone who is very much like them on the book. Weingrod and the officials then wrote a Hebrew name next to the students' Chinese names on stickers.

The embassy also brought the book to a migrant school.

"The Israeli embassy and I thought it was important to bring the book and its message to children who don't have the same opportunities as others," Weingrod said. "We wanted to share with them the simple fact that they are children like every other child in the world."

More similarities than differences

The children always ask Weingrod about Israel and Israeli children. The author tells them that he thinks Chinese kids are generally politer and

quieter than Israeli kids.

Adults, meanwhile, wonder why Weingrod chose to write about China.

A few years ago, he found a notebook with poems that he wrote when he was young.

As a child, he used to think a lot about boys who were like him – who have the same thoughts, love the same things, share the same dreams – in a very faraway place. He wrote about a boy in China, a place that seemed very exotic and mysterious to him.

After the poem was published as a book in Israel, Weingrod decided to make it bilingual in the hope of spreading its multicultural message.

After the book was published, he got a phone-call from the Israeli embassy.

"One of my friends gave me the book, and I read it, it was amazing,"

he was told.

That's how Weingrod was invited to China to give readings.

An art lover

A graduate of Tel Aviv University, where he majored in communications and political science, Weingrod was a news editor before writing *Like You, Like Me*. He is now content manager of a children's website in Israel.

"News editors and journalists deal with a lot of harsh and difficult issues, and there is a lot of pressure in that profession," he said. "Writing and creating Web games, poems or stories for children demands more creativity and imagination. And, of course, the content is more innocent and naive. I prefer that, and enjoy it very much."

His new book, *Things That Make Me Wonder*, is a collection of children's poems, and will be published in Israel in a few weeks.

'Trash to Art' workshop nurtures awareness of environment



Students tell people on the road at 798 Art Zone to visit their exhibition.

By Wu Hao

Last Sunday at 798 Art Zone, several young students wore cardboard boxes with slogans persuading people to visit their "Trash to Art" event at Yuanfen Flow Gallery. They shouted things like, "Come in, we have a super toilet!"

Behind the frivolity, though, is a serious cause.

The event was part of annual activities organized by Greening the Beige (GtB), a volunteer group that offers a public platform to nurture environmental awareness through the arts.

The idea was brought forward by a group of students from the high school associated with Capital Normal University (CNU). This year, they tried to contribute to environmental protection by turning trash into art.

Dozens of cardboard boxes they collected from supermarkets were piled into Yuanfen Flow Gallery to display their handmade art.

"Awareness of environmental protection is not enough if it isn't combined with some kind of actual form," said a volunteer student.

Among the handmade pieces were rings made from copper wires, bookmarks made from parts of other art works from students of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and many other imaginative products.

The small items were sold for 3 yuan each.

"It's quite tough for these students in that the rent of this place is 2,000 yuan and they only get 800 yuan in funding, so their big mission today is to cover the rent," said Stacey Niu, who started volunteering at GtB in January. She had invited two friends to help.



Visitors make crafts



Assisting to make a toy

Photos by Wu Hao

The students only made 100 yuan, but they collected 2,000 yuan in donations.

Su Guanchen, the student organizer of the event, participated in last year's GtB event and became an environmentalist. He and his friend, Zhao Wei, called on their fellow classmates to contribute to this year's show.

"Most visitors told us they think it's a fresh way to pass the idea of environmental protection and arouse the interest of more citizens," Su said.

They ran into skeptics, however.

"Some people don't have a strong awareness for environmental protection, so they think this is meaningless," Zhao said. "But I think we've done something to foster Chinese consciousness of the issue."

GtB was founded in 2007 by Carissa Welton, who majored in humanities and Asian art studies. After being selected to build a large-scale installation for an art festival in the US that required more than 2,000 used plastic bags, Welton began researching white pollution in China. She discovered several artists,

schools, groups and organizations that are also involved in really creative projects designed to tackle environmental problems.

"And that's when I thought, Wow, wouldn't it be great for us all to get together and share what we're doing with the rest of the community in order to help inspire others to do something positive for the environment in a creative way?" Welton wrote on her blog on GtB's website.

That's how GtB was born. Since, through the online platform and annual event platform – the two components that make up its whole goal – GtB has conducted many events designed to celebrate innovative and eco-friendly projects.

"Greening the Beige is a project and experiment, a collective, and an annual series of events," Welton said at the opening ceremony of last year's GtB event. "My hope is that we will be able to gather enough support and find partners to develop Greening the Beige into a working organization that encourages Beijingers to be creative and at the same time responsible towards the environment."

Welton has since moved back to the US, so it's up to her colleagues to continue the vision. It's been a challenge so far.

"She handed it over to two volunteers, and one of them also went to the US," Niu said. "I don't know how long this organization will last because there is no one really in charge of it now in Beijing."

Still, GtB has sown the seeds in the younger generation.

Shunqi Gao, a volunteer from Beijing No. 35 Middle School, wrote on his GtB blog: "I can't say that I am a qualified volunteer since I've just tried to help with the translation of some articles after joining GtB. However, I did learn a lot, such as [trash] classification and the harm of disposable paper cups, etc."

"After I read these articles, I can't wait to translate them into Chinese using my limited knowledge in the hope of letting more citizens know about these things that can benefit both the environment and our health."

Collecting medical reimbursement

By Wu Tong

Last week, an expat successfully applied for medical reimbursement to cover his medical fees, marking the first time someone has taken advantage of the new health care policy that opened to foreigners last October.

The expat, surnamed Wang, paid upfront for his medical bill. With the certificate provided by the medical center, he got 1,300 of his 3,500 yuan reimbursed. The policy states that insurance will cover anything beyond 1,800 yuan.

The procedure took less than three weeks. Chinese employees must go through a similar procedure to claim reimbursement.

Since the medical insurance management center only accepts claims from companies rather than individuals, employers are required to register the names of their foreign employees for social security insurance within 30 days after issuing a work permit, according to the Interim Measures for the Participation in Social Insurance of Foreigners Employed in China.

The Interim Measure

Official statistics show there are more than 230,000 expats working in China and 40,000



Most public hospitals have clear signs to help patients navigate the reimbursement system.

CFP Photo

in Beijing legally.

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security drew new management measures on October 15, 2011 to give foreigners social insurance.

According to the measures, foreigners who are legally employed by enterprises, public institutions, social groups, privately-owned non-enterprise units, foundations, law firms and accounting firms which have been incorporated or registered in line with the laws

in China are required to participate in basic pension insurance, basic medical insurance, work-related injury insurance, unemployment insurance and maternity insurance.

The employing units and foreigners should pay the social insurance premiums in accordance with relevant regulations. If a foreign employee who participates in social insurance has any dispute with the employing unit because of insurance, he can apply for mediation, arbitration and litigation through local authorities. Foreigners may request social insurance administrative departments or social insurance premium collection institutions to deal with situations where their rights are infringed upon by the employing unit.

Reimbursement procedure

Employees need to keep all receipts, then hand them to the medical insurance management center. Consult your human and resources department for more information.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiying@ynet.com

I often shoot 35mm black-and-white film using a technique called "pushing" (I usually push ISO 400 film to ISO 800). I'm looking for a place that can develop these films. So far, I've only found shops that develop pushed color film.

There are actually a number of shops that develop 35mm black-and-white pushed film, but only a few do the job according to professional standards. One of these is Wanda, located on 20 Meishuguan Dong Jie (east of the National Art Museum), Dongcheng District.

I think the Beijing weather is responsible for the return of my migraines. I heard that acupuncture can help migraine sufferers. Can you recommend a good acupuncturist?

Better see a doctor to get a more reliable diagnosis. Check out Beijing Zhongyi Hospital, which has a good acupuncture department with migraine experts. Call the hospital at 5217 6677 for more information.

I'm looking for a racquetball court. It doesn't particularly matter where, although inside Chaoyang District would be nice.

The Beijing Hilton Hotel Fitness Center has a large racquetball court. Call the hotel at 6466 2288 for booking cost and other details.

Is it possible to bring a dog on the train from Beijing to Guangzhou, and how can it be done?

It won't be a problem bringing your dog on the train, but pets are restricted to the cargo hold; they're not allowed to enter the passenger cabins with their owner. A day or two before departure, apply for a health certificate for your dog at a veterinary clinic authorized by the Railway Department. On the day of departure, put your dog in a comfortable but sturdy cage with sufficient food, and bring it to the railway station's Consignment Station. For more information, get in touch with the Railway Veterinary Station (Tel: 5184 0893) and the Consignment Station (Tel: 5182 4244).

(By Wei Ying)

Making spring tea at Dajueshi temple

By Annie Wei

Dajueshi, a 1,000-year-old temple in west Beijing, is known for aged trees, magnolia flowers and quiet ambience. During early spring, visitors can enjoy magnolia flowers and watch the farmers fry fresh tea leaves.

Dajueshi Temple
Where: 9 Dajueshi Lu, Xiangxishan, Bei'anhe, Haidian District

Open: 8 am - 5 pm
Tel: 6245 6189
Cost: 10 yuan



CFP Photo

Son of Wagner singer takes t

By Xiong Yuan

Tuesday's performance of *The Flying Dutchman* marked the opening of the 2012 Opera Festival at the National Center for the Performing Arts.

That the play is being staged in 2012 is extra special, as this is the 200-year memorial of Richard Wagner. *The Flying Dutchman* is the NCPA's first attempt at representing the powerful work of the greatest composer of German opera.

For its production of *The Flying Dutchman*, the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA) pulled out all the stops.

Not only does the cast and crew number in the hundreds, but the set includes a 12-meter tall and 15-meter long ghost ship on the stage. Winds blow from above and high-tech monitors project images of rollicking waves.

To make sure the actors are as comfortable on the actual set as in the rehearsal room, Deputy Director of Programming Wei Lanfen said the painting room was turned into a parallel practice session.



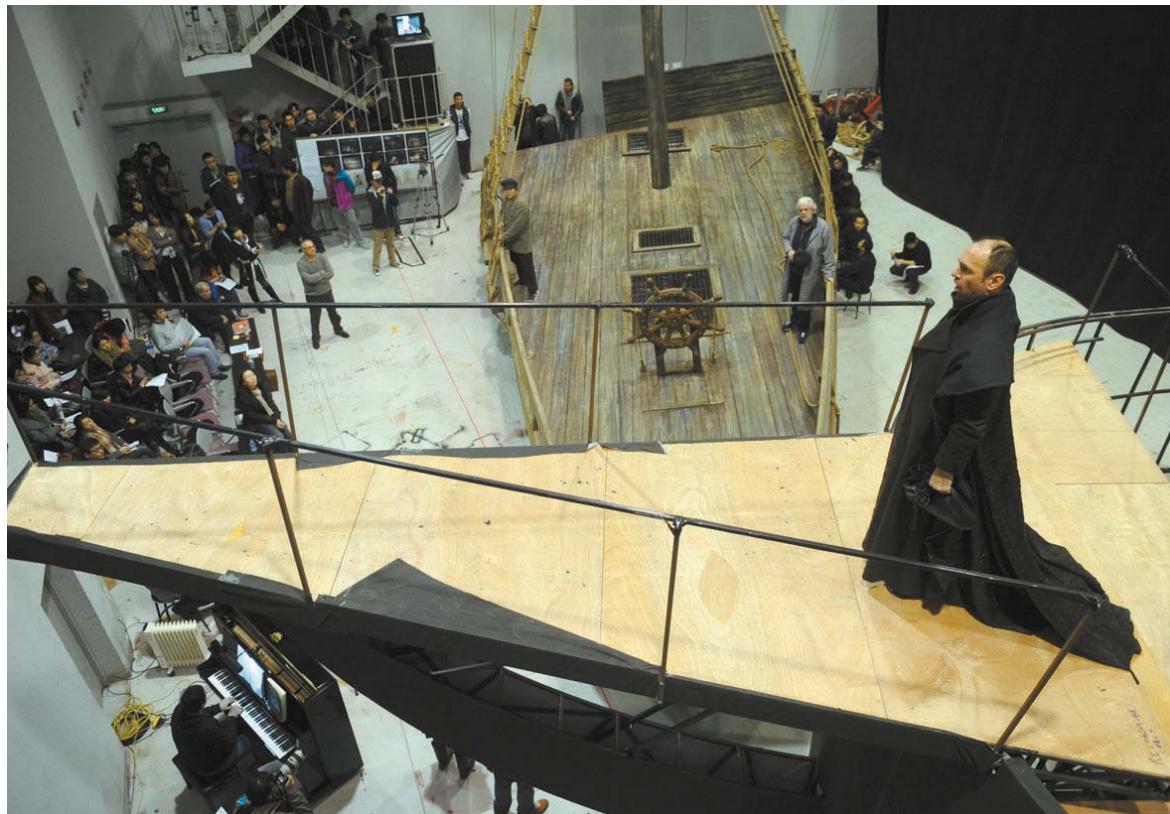
Director Giancarlo Del Monaco

Romantic epic

The Flying Dutchman, generally recognized as the first masterpiece by Wilhelm Richard Wagner (1813-1883), opened the NCPA's 2012 Opera Festival.

Its story, a blend of old legends from northern Europe and Wagner's own experience of being at sea during a raging storm, focuses on a cursed ship and its captain's love and destiny. Its dismal colors and occasionally elegant and easy style have made *The Flying Dutchman* one of Wagner's most performed pieces since its debut in 1843.

Wei said *The Flying Dutchman* is not only the NCPA's first Wagner opera, but its first German one.



Rehearsing for *The Flying Dutchman*

Expecting the best

The director, Giancarlo Del Monaco, is the son of Mario Del Monaco, a famous Italian tenor of the last century who performed many of Wagner's operas. Indeed, two-thirds of his performances were in German.

"My mom was also an opera singer, my grandfather was a composer and my grandmother was a singer. So I was born into a musical family. Opera is my world, and the stage is my home," he said. Under his family's influence, Del Monaco began to study opera at the age of five and produced his first opera at 17.

But that close association with theater took a toll on his personal life. "My ex-wives said that I would only feel at home if I have moved into the theater,"

Del Monaco said. Indeed, his commitment and sense of responsibility for each opera production is obvious to all. On rehearsal days, his shouting was even heard outside the rehearsal hall.

Del Monaco has an explosive temper and emphasizes detail in his productions. He expects the best of every member of the cast - even chorus members caught with their hats out of position could invoke the director's fury.

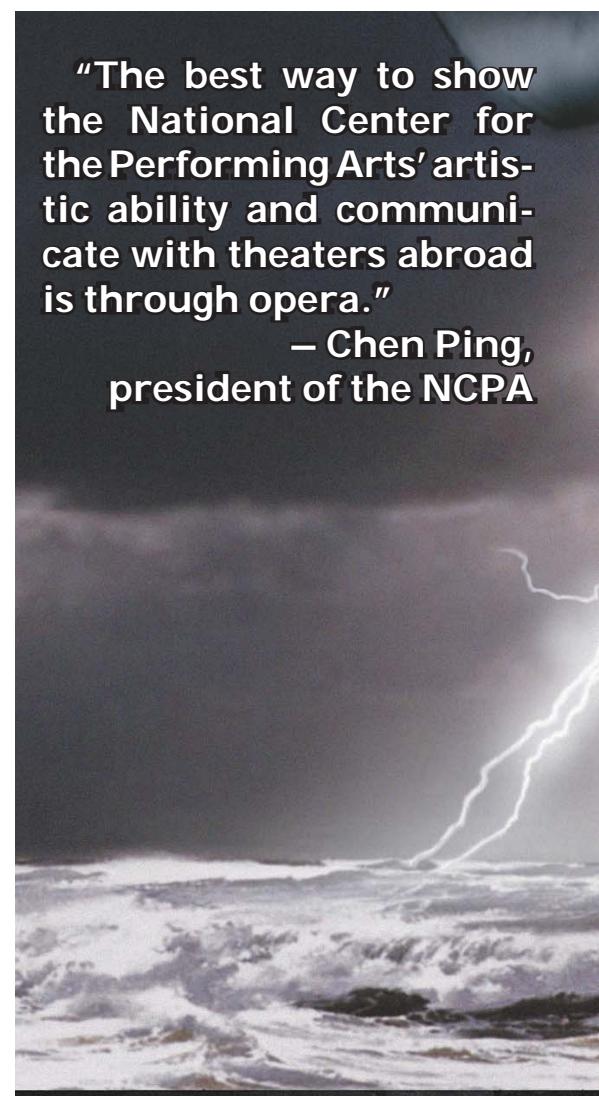
But Wei said the cast recognized that Del Monaco's stringent requirements were reasonable. "It is his impeccable attention to detail that ensures the quality of *The Flying Dutchman*," he said.

Making a blockbuster

Wagner's operas are usually based on myths and

"The best way to show the National Center for the Performing Arts' artistic ability and communicate with theaters abroad is through opera."

— Chen Ping,
president of the NCPA



The Flying Dutchman

Where: National Center for the Performing Arts
When: 7:30 pm, until April 8
Tel: 6655 0000



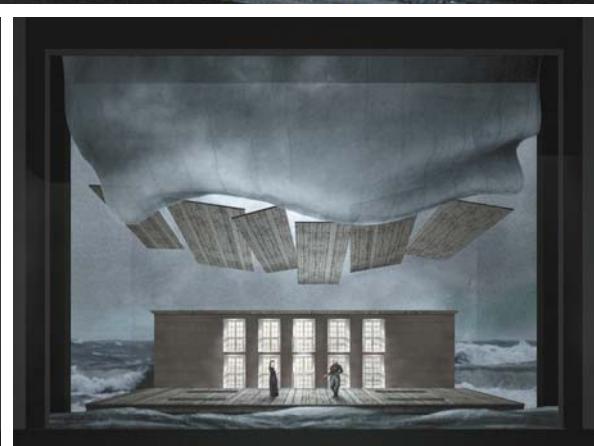
legends, giving their directors a lot of creative space. Del Monaco decided to make the NCPA's production *The Flying Dutchman* as impressive as a film.

"Opera is my favorite medium, but I also love film. These days, film has taken a lot of attention away from opera. I'm afraid that one day it will kill off this art form, so I'm trying to combine the two," Del Monaco said at the press conference.

Twelve projectors will be used during the production to provide lighting and special effects. Del Monaco said his creative team attempted to create "flowing" effects and something to give a three-dimensional visual punch.

For the performance, the audience will be seated around the projectors to ensure they experience the

the helm of NCPA's Dutchman



Photos provided by the National Center for the Performing Arts

BEIJING TODAY Editors: Yu Shanshan Zhao Hongyi Designer: Deng Ning

same effects no matter where they are seated. "We want to make people feel like they are sitting on the beach when they are in the theater. We want to bring them the senses of sea wind and brine," he said.

Stage effects have long been one of Del Monaco's strengths. In order to attract more Chinese audiences, the creative team made the stage appear as though it was covered in sea water. The backgrounds of the stage show similar rocking effects around the macabre ghost ship. Chiffon, silk and projection screens help convey wind conditions.

The Flying Dutchman by the NCPA also follows current international convention that requires three opera acts to be performed without disruption. "This is always a big challenge for the director, the creative

team and the actors", Wei said.

Self-produced opera

The Opera Festival runs from April through July and is now in its fourth year.

As of last July, the NCPA had produced 19 operas and planned out performance dates through 2015. The production is now growing at a speed of six to seven operas each year. The NCPA's goal is 50 operas.

This year, the NCPA plans to produce Tannhauser, currently at the China National Opera House, and Lohengrin, another Wagner opera.

Last year's festival saw 46 works performed during three months for as many as 60,000 viewers. But opera theaters throughout the world, the NCPA is struggling to attract younger viewers.

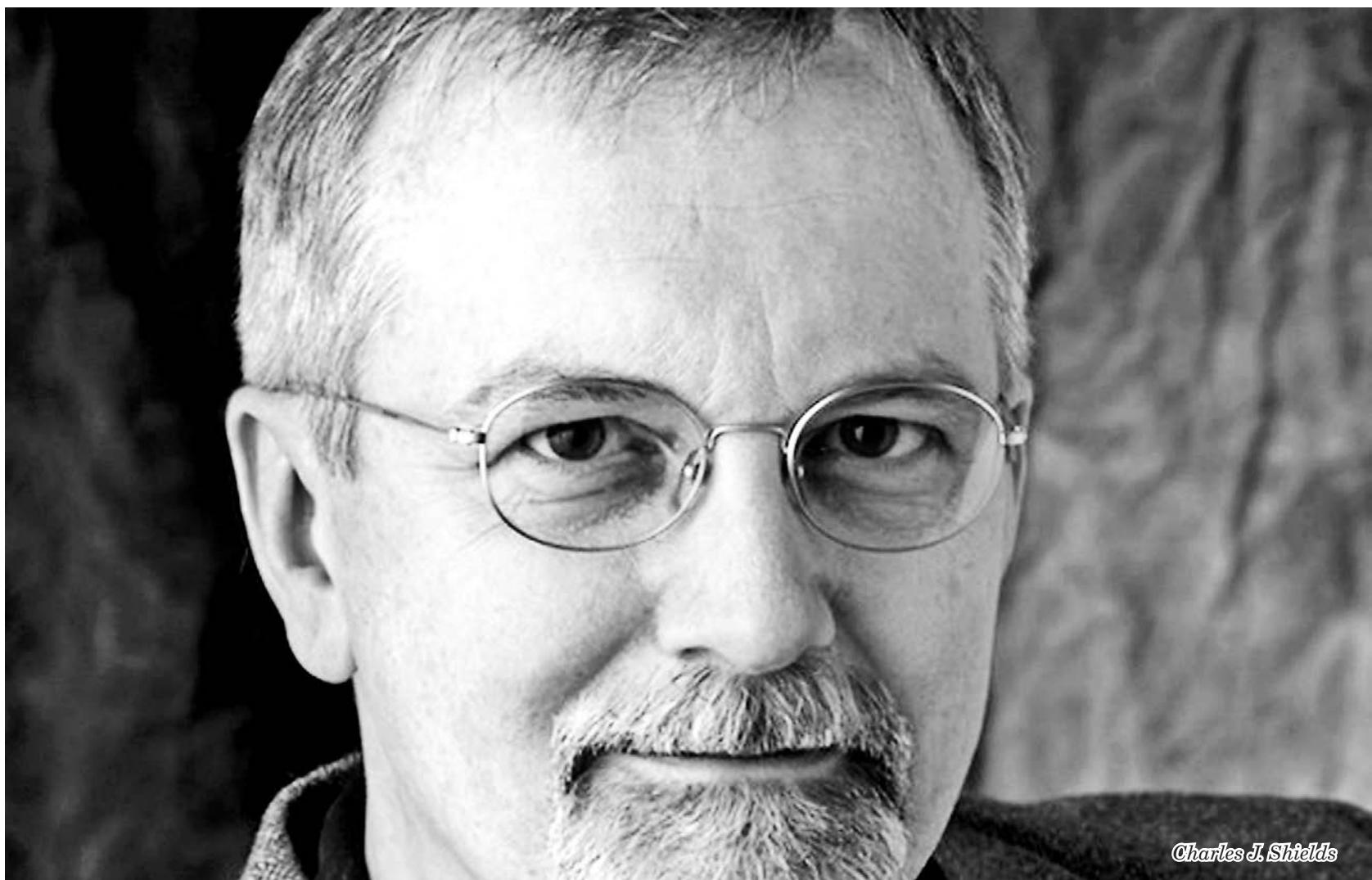
"After the opera *Tosca*, our enthusiastic viewers asked Leo Nucci for an encore. That's when I looked around and asked myself, why don't I see any of our children?" said Chen Ping, president of the NCPA.

"If the NCPA wants to become a world famous theater, our productions have to have some strategy for drawing in more viewers, especially from the youth."

Opera as an art has a history of 400 years. For theaters in London, Paris, New York and Italy, the quality of their opera productions represents the theater's own artistic ability.

"The best way to show the National Center for the Performing Arts' artistic ability and communicate with theaters abroad is through opera," Chen said.

Contradictory avant-garde writer remembered



Charles J. Shields

By Charles Zhu

Charles J. Shields offers a detailed and sad account of the struggle and painful longevity of Kurt Vonnegut, who died in 2007 at the age of 95. His well known phrase, "So it goes," originated with his book *Slaughterhouse-Five* and conjures up images of the writer's cynicism and shoulder hunching.

Shields tells of how the author of such black humor novels as *Cat's Cradle*, *Sirens of Titan* and *Breakfast of Champions* tried to hitch a ride across the River Styx in 1984 during a period of extreme alcoholism. Ultimately, he was pulled back to life by his marriage to the New York photographer Jill Krementz, who the author blames for much of Vonnegut's later suffering.

Vonnegut was born in Indianapolis in 1922 into an affluent family. His father, an architect, lost his money in the Great Depression and his mother committed suicide on Mother's Day when he was 21.

His older brother, Bernard, was a physicist and climatologist who experi-

mented with ways to supercool water – a possible inspiration for "ice-nine," the substance that turns all moisture on Earth into a super solid in Cat's Cradle.

In his early career, he wrote about Central America, sexual disorders, test taking and Saddam Hussein. He started by working as a reporter at a news bureau in Chicago, covering a city beat, and later as a publicist at General Electric.

In journalism, he learned to write clear, concise and drama-packed sentences. "Writing that was easy to scan would become one of the hallmarks of his fiction," Shields said.

"A lot of critics," Vonnegut would say, "think I'm stupid because my sentences are so simple and my method is so direct: they think these are defects. No. The point is to write as much as you know as quickly as possible."

At the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, Vonnegut was ridiculed by the students as a clown.

His masterpiece was *Slaughterhouse-Five*, the novelistic account of the destruction of Dresden by

firebombing in 1945. The incident left so indelible a mark on his mind that it became a literary symbol under his pen.

The novel echoes J. D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield in its first sentence: "All this happened, more or less. The war parts, anyway, are pretty much true. One guy I knew really was shot in Dresden for taking a teapot that wasn't his. Another guy I knew really did threaten to have his personal enemies killed by hired gunmen after the war. And so on. I've changed all the names."

He produced short stories, some of which he sold to *The Saturday Evening Post*; in those years, a single story could earn him the equivalent of six weeks salary at General Electric. An editor and old college friend named Knox Burger took him on, publishing him first at *Collier's* magazine and then at Dell paperbacks before trying to become his agent in 1970.

Shields portrays Vonnegut as Whitmanesque and paradoxical. He was essentially a conservative Midwesterner, priding himself in his German heritage and commercial urges.

But the author is also depicted as having a shade of radical chic. During World War II, he was an isolationist who stood on the side of Charles A. Lindbergh. Yet, he later grew to be an anti-Vietnam War black humor writer.

As a father, he could be sweet and generous but also "cruel" and "scary," according to one nephew. When his sister died of cancer within a day of her husband's untimely death in a train wreck, Vonnegut and his wife raised three of their four orphaned children as well as their own three children in a cacophonous house on Cape Cod.

Vonnegut's presence was a mixed blessing.

He was generally deemed a writer of science fiction, and much of the literary establishment considered him a writer of juvenile and jokey pulp fiction. However, he resolutely refused to accept the label.

As a matter fact, he was a great "comic" or ironic or tragic-comical-ironic novelist of World War II, much like Joseph Heller. He deemed himself a serious writer, a humanist and a

black humorist.

He was antagonistic about the moon landings on July 20, 1969. On a broadcast with Walter Cronkite, Gloria Steinem and others, he ridiculed the entire effort and said that the \$33 billion should have been spent "cleaning up our filthy colonies here on Earth." CBS later was flooded with angry letters, saying that it was "un-American."

Shields said Vonnegut successfully blended his familiar and writerly personas. Vonnegut had reached "a tipping point in the balance between fresh narrative and essayistic memoir," he writes.

The book presents a Vonnegut who was living in his "own private rain" – hobbled by a "hexed" second marriage, nursing grudges and running out of inspirations.

Considering the tragedy he encountered in his early youth and his sad marriages, it's not hard to understand the pessimism with humanity that remains constant throughout his works.

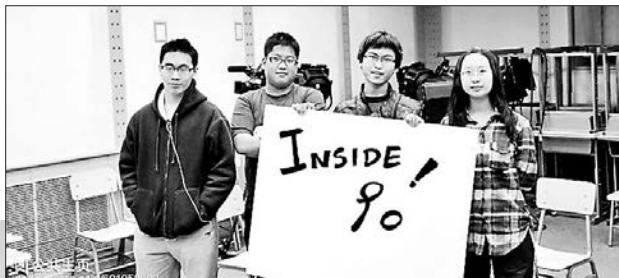
Vonnegut was indeed a "Man of Sorrows," much as Mark Twain, to whom he is often compared.

“ Many of the stereotypes about my generation are based on the limited contact that people have with us ”

Filmmaker to salvage '90s image



Film is time-consuming work.



The crew members were all born in the 1990s.



Li Xiaotian, the 17-year-old director of Inside '90

Photos provided by Li Xiaotian

By Zhang Yuting

Li Tianxiao typifies the '90s generation – but that's not something he likes.

Like most generational labels, the '90s is one rife with bias and misunderstanding. While searching for a way by which members of his age group could express themselves, Li stumbled into documentary film.

While most documentary directors get caught up in presenting a story or making a statement, Li does his best to make *Inside! 90* as true to the circumstances of his peers as possible.

Born in 1994, Li is currently a senior at the High School Affiliated to Renmin University. His interests are reading, current events and searching for the truth. In spite of his young age, he has shown a remarkable aptitude for independent thinking and managing personal relationships. He has been an intern at *Blog Weekly* and acting lecturer of movies and television at Renmin University.

Having spent most of the last 12 years at a boarding school, Li is more mature than his peers. He prefers to communicate with those older than him – a painful process, since most immediately write him off as a "pea-brained and naive" child of the '90s.

"A friend told me that wise people see the person instead of the label. Maybe so, but does that somehow remove the label?" Li said. In order to show the inaccuracy of the label, Li decided to film a documentary about people in his age group.

"Documentary is a completely new area for me. The reason I decided to shoot a film instead of writing is because film has impact," Li said.

He said that societal changes have caused more and more people to have a reduced patience and capability for reading.

"I see *Inside! 90* not as a work of art, but as an instrument to send a message," Lin said.

The making of that message began in September 2010.

Documentary film is a complicated job even for a professional team, let alone a ragtag band of high school students who face many other burdens. The group spent many hours picking who to interview, arranging schedules and editing. While the filming itself was a bewildering experience, Li's friends and partners helped overcome the more technical problems.

"What matters most is that the documentary is objective," Li said.

The interviewees selected for the film were '90s children from various walks of life. "Whether someone was a student, a rock singer, an artist or a worker, it was the year they were born that qualified them to tell their story in *Inside! 90*."

"I believe many of the stereotypes about my generation are based on the limited contact that people have with us. Their ideas are ridiculously biased," Lin said. "Obviously I still own my perspective about my generation, but this documentary is absolutely not the place for me to express it."

While '80s children are associated with the climate and characteristics of the country in the years following China's opening, the '90s generation seems more associated with the rise of the Internet and big-city life. Few rural juveniles were included in the documentary because they were not considered to be part of the mainstream.

The documentary *Inside! 90* is being released in six segments, and each interviewee will be edited down to a 10-minute slot that will run as an online short.

"A lot of my views changed while making *Inside! 90*," Lin said.

"In the past, when I saw really crazy examples of what people in my generation were doing, I was quick to say 'What a stupid group!' like I wasn't a part of them," he said. "Now I see the '90s kids as excellent and think I'm the real dimwit."

Inside! 90 has finished production and will begin being released this summer.

Li is planning to study abroad when he graduates from high school. While he's not sure he's prepared for life in another country, he sees the experience as a new avenue to promote himself.

Colorful spring shopping

By Annie Wei

Beijing's spring is short. Within a few days, everyone will be dressed like its summer. But with *Beijing Today's* help, you can make the most out of this season.



Longchamp sandals, price to be determined



H&M's exclusive conscious collection, price to be determined

Celebrities who walk the red carpet are on the forefront of trends. This year, H&M is releasing a new series – exclusive conscious, using organic cotton, linen and more sustainable materials to create star looks. This new collection's inspiration came from the blue tuxedo that Amanda Seyfield wore for a movie premier in London; a pink sleeveless top and dress worn by Viola Davis when she was nominated for an Oscar; and Michelle Williams' tight golden colored top when she attended the BAFTA in London.

This new collection will be sold throughout 100 H&M outlets beginning April 12.



NINE WEST skirt, priced to be determined



American Vintage candy-bright top, price to be determined

Bright and candy colors like mint, orange, fluorescent lime and rainbow are the most popular styles for summer T-shirts and shorts.



Fluorescent colored underwear from H&M, price to be determined

H&M recently introduced its underwear collection for the spring and summer, featuring romantic lace, fluorescent colors, leopard and chic black.



Swarovski chunky crystal earrings, price to be determined



Emilio Pucci, price to be determined

Where to buy

Stores like H&M, Nine West and Swarovski can be found at Solana

Where: 6 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 5905 6668

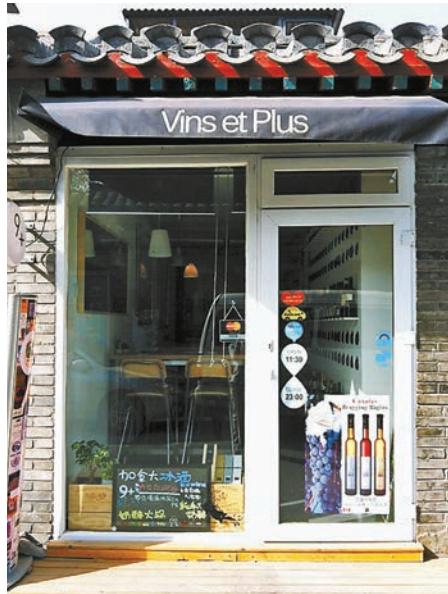
Brands like Emilio Pucci or Longchamp are available at Lane Crawford, 1 Jingfangjie, Xicheng District.

American Vintage is available on Taobao.

New openings at chic Wudaoying Hutong

By Annie Wei

With more small but interesting new eateries and wine bars opening up on Wudaoying Hutong last winter, the area is finally beginning to fill out and realize its potential. Tabbed the new Nanluogu Xiang by those in the know as early as two years ago, it's bound to explode in popularity this coming season.



The new wine bar 9+ is small but lovely.



9+ also offers cakes and desserts.

The smallest wine bar

A wine bar that opened last November, 9+, boasts about its size – or lack thereof. At 26 square meters, it's the smallest wine bar in Beijing, located opposite the Spanish restaurant Saffron.

It carries 70 kinds of wines from well known wine regions, all of which go for 30 yuan per glass. The bar has two wine dispensers with an inert gas prevention system to trap the wine's flavor and character for longer periods.

The owner, who refused to be named, is a wine distributor who operates the online store 9plus.co. His main reason for launching a mini wine bar was to supplement his website, to help people find what they really like and make friends. The bar often hosts events for wine knowledge and tasting, and they are welcome by many young drinkers.

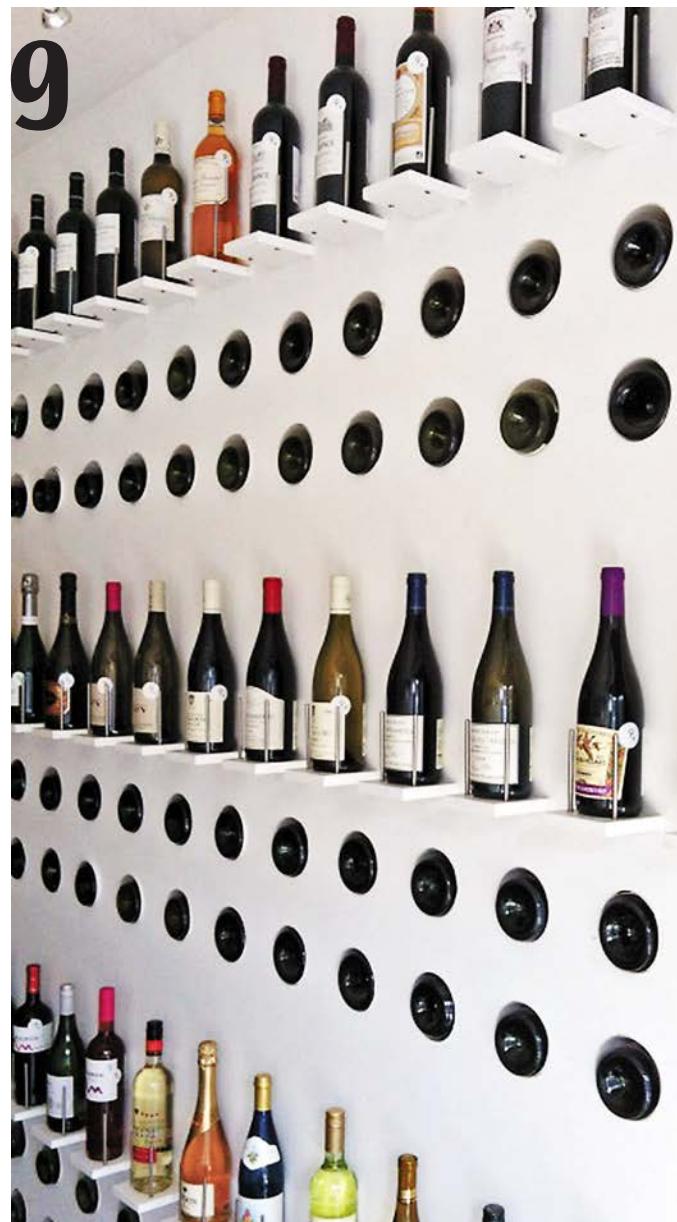
In winter, 9+ offers cheese hotpot and oysters. All their cheese comes from Le fromager de Pekin, the brand of a local cheese maker.

The "9" in the bar's name is a homonym in Chinese for "wine." The plus sign indicates foods such as cupcakes and oysters, which the bar sells. As the weather warms up, reservations will become necessary, especially for those who would like to order oysters, which must be ordered fresh.

Anyone who wants to purchase wine can visit 9plus.co.

9plus

Where: 61 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District
Open: 11 am – 11 pm except Mondays
Tel: 8404 5669



9+ offers over 70 kinds of wines, starting at 30 yuan per glass.
Photos provided by 9+

Delicate sushi bar

It's the small sushi bars that people fall in love with: places that are barely 30 square meters with three tables and a tiny bar, with menus written on a blackboard and a banana tree on the window.

You House Sushi is exactly that kind of place. Its fare is inexpensive, too: soup and salad cost 10 to 25 yuan, nigiri sushi costs 20 to 40 yuan, sushi rolls costs between 25 and 60 yuan, and sashimi cost 30 to 50 yuan for six pieces. Noodles and rice are 28 to 68 yuan, and hand rolls are 20 to 35 yuan.

Items recommended by regular visitors include the seafood soup (25 yuan), fresh water eel with rice (68 yuan), with well-grilled eel and a suitable portion of rice, and You house roll (55 yuan), which is the restaurant's specialty.

Many customers order for takeaway because the place is so small.

You House Sushi

Where: 27 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District
Open: noon – 11 pm
Tel: 6410 5295



Sushi starts from 20 yuan

CFP Photo

British pub food

Vineyard Cafe's sister brand, Vine Leaf opened, on a hutong off Wudaoying. The restaurant offers the same delivery menu as Vineyard Cafe, but also new items like pies. We recommend the steak and ale pie (78 yuan), a big serving of stewed beef, carrots and mushroom, paired with fresh crushed tomatoes, green beans and carrots. Indian spiced fish with vegetable curry (72 yuan) is delicious as well. Snack starts from 28 yuan, and a glass of house wine costs 40 yuan.

This is real British pub food done authentically. The dishes are worth every penny.

The Vine Leaf

Where: 9 Jianchang Hutong, Dongcheng District
Open: 11 am – 11:30 pm except Mondays
Tel: 6407 6308



Inside The Vine Leaf



Steak and ale pie, 78 yuan Photos by Zhou Baoling

Dining

Mussels from Brussels: All You Can Eat

Pay 100 yuan for all-you-can-eat steamed mussels in white wine at the newly opened Brussels Restaurant & Bar.

Enjoy a serving of Belgian fries with four house-special mayonnaises.

Where: Brussels Restaurant & Bar, 4 Gongti Bei Lu (inside Yuanjidian Research Complex)

When: Until April 30, every Monday, 6-11 pm

Cost: 100 yuan

Tel: 13488804794



Lobby Lounge: Spring afternoon tea

In the spirit of Spring, Lobby Lounge has refreshed its contemporary afternoon tea offerings with lighter fruit pastries and green tea inspired cakes. Put a spring into your step with the zesty berry Mascarpone cake or join us to savor the season's newest Longjing tea.

Where: Lobby Lounge, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 1-30

Cost: 188 yuan per set

(15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 37



Free burgers

All burgers are buy-one-get-one-free at The Filling Station on Mondays. The offer includes everything from the Filling Station burger (58 yuan) to the mammoth big double burger (98 yuan).

Where: Filling Station, 2F, 8 Laiguangying Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Monday

Tel: 8470 3821

Email:

info@fillingstationbeijing.com



Rent

Top-floor 2-bedroom flat at Park Front Mansion, Chaoyang Park

This apartment is on Floor 22 of Park Front Mansion on the south side of Chaoyang Park. It is 116 square meters and has two bedrooms, a big living room and a dining room. The window offers a south-facing view of a garden and lake.

The high-rise residential towers have a nice design. The apartment comes fully

furnished with beige carpet in each unit. Simple decorations and appliances are provided. The room has been favored by both Asians and Europeans, and is clean, quiet and comfortable.

Fee: 8,500 yuan per month, including management and heating fees

Tel: Thomas 13381358652

Class

Mark & Annie's Argentine tango



Experienced tango teachers Mark and Annie take to the dance floor at the Hot Cat Club every Monday at 7:30 pm to teach a beginner and intermediate mixed class. Stick around to try your steps from 9 pm onward.

Classes cost 70 yuan per session.

Where: Hot Cat Club, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: Every Monday, 7:30 pm

Cost: 70 yuan per session

Tel: 13681014992

Email:

markannietango@gmail.com

Event

Workshop promises secrets of English for cross-cultural communication

Whether you are receiving clients from abroad, working in international teams or just socializing with foreigners, speaking "good English" is not good enough!

This one-hour workshop for intermediate and advanced learners will teach you the secrets of communicating successfully across cultures. Our English program manager will give you some quick tips on cultural taboos, what to do when meeting someone for the first time and how to develop an international style of communication to get your message across.

The workshop will be offered in English only.

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: April 7, 11 am – noon

Tel: 8404 4166

Chinese through songs workshop

Improve your Chinese by learning popular songs. The songs taught in this class transcend generational boundaries and cover all genres.

Music plays a big part in China's culture and history, and having a better understanding of classics and pop songs is important. Our Chinese music expert will teach you the history behind the lyrics, the artist's backgrounds, explain the vocabulary and make sure you leave the class knowing at least one song for your next karaoke night.

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: April 13, 6:30-8 pm

Cost: 40 yuan

Tel: 8404 4166

Email: contact@cultureyard.net

Pet adoption

Ms. Dot needs a new home

Ms. Dot, a two-year-old female cat, needs a new home.

She is a friendly, active and smart-looking cat with spots on her belly and a cute one on her nose. She is rather talkative and hungry for love. She likes sleeping next to someone or sitting with you when you use the computer or watch TV.

We are trying to find her a suitable home. If interested, fill out our online survey at beijingcat.org, scarlett@beijingcat.org or phone 13501315988.

Ms. Dot has been vaccinated and spayed.

(By Jackie Zhang)



Sat, Apr. 7



Nightlife
Carlos Gibbs

Gibbs has many identities, including DJ, owner of a record company, founder of Artists Union, organizer of parties and so on. It's hard to define who he is. His Rainbow Disco Club is one of the most famous underground music venues in Tokyo. He will come to Beijing and bring his best music, ranging from disco to live house.

Where: Guanghua Road SOHO A-101, 22 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

When: April 7, 10 pm – 6 am next day

Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 5900 6128

Mon, Apr. 9

Exhibition

Sculpture and Painting – Tony Cragg solo Exhibition

Cragg is an influential British sculptor and plays a leading role in the field of contemporary arts. The 176 works in this exhibition are handpicked by Cragg, including major works from the last 15 years. This exhibition marks the start of the "UK Now" festival.

Where: Art Gallery of the China Academy of Art, 8 Huajiadi Nan Jie, Chaoyang District

When: 3 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 6477 1575



Nightlife
Shaddai Band

Shaddai is an international reggae band with six people playing original works and the music of Bob Marley. The band has a drummer, bassist, keyboard, guitar, trombone and vocals. The band will be based in Beijing for some time to come. The musicians aim to spread reggae and the spirit of Jamaica Sunshine Island.

Fri, Apr. 6

Where: Jianghu Bar, Mianhua Hutong No. 7, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6401 5269



Tue, Apr. 10

Exhibition

Manuel Felguerez

Felguerez is one of Mexico's greatest abstract artists currently working. He insists on his international perspective and modern vision, and not only paints, but carves. This exhibition provides a rare chance for Chinese viewers to appreciate Mexican art.

Thirty-four paintings, sculptures and other works are in this exhibition, expressing Felguerez's mature and original artistic characteristics.

Where: Art Gallery of the China Academy of Art, 8 Huajiadi Nan Jie, Chaoyang District

When: 5 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 6477 1575



Sun, Apr. 8

Opera

'The Wandering Dutchman' – National Grand Theater

The Opera Festival of National Grand Theater 2012 is set to begin. The director of this opera is Giancarlo Del Monaco, who has directed more than 100 operas and won acclaim from audiences around the world. The conductor is Lu Jia, who has conducted nearly 2,000 concerts and operas with more than 100 opera houses and symphonies.

Where: the National Grand Theater, Xicheng District

When: April 8, 7:30 pm
Admission: 160-680 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000



Wed, Apr. 11

Nightlife
Iced Earth



This is the first time that Iced Earth, a famous American band, is coming to Beijing, bringing its progressive and powerful metal. It became famous after the release of its album *Burnt Offerings*. Their *Days of Purgatory* and *Alive in Athens* also received praise.

Where: TANGO, 79 Hepingli Xijie, Dongcheng District
When: 4:30 pm
Admission: 200-350 yuan
Tel: 400-610 3721

Thu, Apr. 12

Concert
Spirited Away – Joe Hisaishi, Hayao Miyazaki

Everyone knows Hayao Miyazaki's animated masterpiece, but fewer people know about the accompanying soundtrack by Joe Hisaishi. In his concert, 10 famous songs from Miyazaki movies will be played consecutively, bringing to life the great animator's works.

Where: Beijing Music Hall, Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District
When: Until April 29, Daily, 5:30-11:30 pm
Admission: 100-580 yuan
Tel: 8408 5551



(By Liu Xiaochchen)

East and west converge in Zhenjiang

By Wu Tong

As a midsize city on the east coast, Zhenjiang is unassuming, hidden behind famous resort cities such as Nanjing and Yangzhou. Nevertheless, the city has never been overshadowed by its neighbors.

The history of Zhenjiang can be traced back to 8th century BC, when it was called Zhufangyi.

When Qin Shi Huang unified the country, Zhenjiang was captured and made a county town, which has since undergone many name changes.

During the Sui Dynasty in 581 AD, the small city turned into a garrison to guard the entrance to the Yangtze River that position gave it its current name, "Zhenjiang."

The city witnessed countless battles and the overthrow of several dynasties. It was the headquarters for Wu during the Three Kingdoms Period, the place where southerners fended off the invasion from northern armies.

Zhenjiang reached its peak during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), when it produced fine silks, satins and silverware for the emperors. The ancient garrison became one of the busiest commercial centers in the country.

Evidence of Zhenjiang's glory can also be found in Chinese literature. Famous figures such as Wang Changling, Li Bai, Wang Anshi, Xin Qiji and Su Shi all passed through. In a garden estate on the outskirts of Zhenjiang, Shen Kuo (1031-95), a Chinese scientist and statesman, wrote the famous Dream Pool Essays while living in isolation.

As a southern city, Zhenjiang may strike some visitors as strange. Northerners may feel puzzled by the smooth Wu language, which is completely different from Mandarin. A traditional Chinese legend called Madame White Snake, about a magical, 1,000-year-old snake that can change into a woman, was passed

on from generation to generation on this land.

Zhenjiang food has its own specialties, too. Crab cream buns, a steamed meat pastry, are the local specialty, while fragrant black vinegar, pork and pickles also bring fame to this coastal city.

Visitors should be sure to check out "three hills and one port," referring to Jiao Hill, Beigu Hill, Golden Hill and Xi Jin port.

Each of the three hills has their own unique characteristics. Jiao Hill is the only one completely surrounded by water, and steles carved during the Song still stand. Beigu Hill is famous for its steep cliffs and carvings left by emperors, while Golden Hill earned its reputation due to its presence in the story Madame White Snake and a famous poem by Wang Changling.

Xi Jin port dates its tradition to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), with its traditional Chinese style of architecture. It leans on Yu Tai Mountain, where visitors can get a bird's-eye view of the city.

The east part of Xi Jin shows a glimpse of modernity. A British consulate that was built here in the late Qing – quite well preserved – is the home of Zhenjiang Museum. The styles both inside and out are a mix of east and west.

Apart from its history, Xi Jin port is looking toward the future. Like at 798 Art District in Beijing, many of Xi Jin's factories from the 1960s have been renovated into bars and art galleries.

Zhenjiang is still one of China's busiest ports for domestic commerce, serving as a hub for trade between northern Jiangsu and Anhui provinces, and Shanghai. But the city doesn't have the bustle of larger metropolises – the people have retained a slower way of life.

Biking is the best way around the city.



Zhenjiang is a typical southern city.

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